

## ABSTRACT

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2       A “swipe”-type magnetic stripe reader suitable as a low-cost computer peripheral  
3 is described, together with distribution programs to create incentives for the wide  
4 deployment of the readers. The readers are used in conjunction with methods for  
5 distributing, through print media, machine readable, magnetically encoded media that  
6 may be read with the readers. An optional authentication mechanism may be built into  
7 the readers that can be used to control their use, based on information encoded into the  
8 machine-readable media that have been distributed. The encoded authentication  
9 information can, for example, be keyed to whether an advertiser has been authorized,  
10 and/or based on temporal criteria, so as to provide for effective time periods for a  
11 promotion.